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Presidential Prattle

Happy Easter all! I hope you are well rested from a wonderful break and have had time to enjoy your family and friends. As daylight savings has drawn to a close, I hope you all have adjusted and had a great summer.

The first immense and exciting thing to happen was the launch of the new SLIANZ website. This occurred at the Auckland Deaf Society on Friday the 6th of March. It was a huge undertaking with a large majority of the work done by Fleur Daniels, a heartfelt thanks to her and also to the previous committee for all their hard work leading up to this. I am confident that this will prove to be a useful tool for both interpreters, Deaf community members and the greater public.

In the first weekend of July, in Christchurch we have our SLIANZ Conference, “Interpreters in an evolving world”. I think this theme is very relevant, we live in a modern world that is constantly changing with advancements in technology and as professionals we should be always looking for opportunities to advance and enhance our own practice. We are very excited about being in the South Island for this year's Conference and I'd like to thank, 'Christchurch Team Evelyn', also Rose and Alisha for all the work they have done so far and have yet to come, in organising this Conference.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at conference in the beautiful 'Garden City'

Rebecca



“HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM”

By Rachel Tate

Whilst interpreting at a job last week, I caught myself thinking “I’m crap at voicing!” and I was extremely grateful for the support of my teamer. And then *today*, in complete contrast to that I found myself thinking the opposite was in fact true, “my voicing is pretty hot!” Throughout my interpreting career thus far (8 years), I’ve switched between these two viewpoints, however through careful analysis have determined that my ‘voicing’ isn’t actually that bad when I understand the signer. The problem for me arises when I struggle to comprehend what is being signed. And it goes without saying that if an interpreter can’t understand the message, Houston we have a problem.

Following our ethic of *competency*, I don’t accept jobs where I know that I would struggle with the message. However, it is inevitable that from time to time we are going to accept the odd challenge or that we will find ourselves working in a situation where we are unfamiliar with a client, or not even that, just that for whatever reason we don’t quite get what is being signed. And I’ve come to the conclusion that ... this is okay! “Okay” in the sense that not comprehending the language of every Deaf person all of the time does not make me a “bad interpreter”.

I am a native English speaker and not a native signer. NZSL is not my first language, and in fact the same can also be said for some of the Deaf clients we work with. This could be one reason for my struggles – just as I no doubt convey unclear messages through my signing at times (i.e. I don’t always make sense when conversing in my second language), the same could be said for some of our clients who are not native signers. Even when conversing in my native tongue, I can stumble over my words; be it whilst excitedly talking with friends or nervously presenting at pace to a group or giving my viewpoint in a stressful meeting, and I need to allow for the possibility that Deaf people might encounter the same pressures when signing, even if it is their native language.

Another reason for my struggles could be the ever-evolving nature of language, the increasingly common amalgamation of overseas signs into NZSL, the introduction of the latest ‘it’ word or the out-of-the-blue use of signs that most other people stopped using well before my time. Often when confronted with an unfamiliar sign, we can gloss over the specific word and continue on with the sentence, the general ‘gist’, the meaning. At other times it may be appropriate and not too disruptive to seek clarification before continuing with our flawless voicing. And then there are those times when you elbow your teamer as desperately and discretely as possible in the hope that they ‘got it’.

So without even discussing the external factors and internal stresses which may contribute to my general well being on any particular day and therefore my ability to successfully form a complete sentence, I have established that there are a number of reasons for my not understanding the message at times. I have found it infinitely useful when I have had the presence of mind to establish what could be contributing to the issue, (e.g. signing pace, time-lag, put glasses ‘on’) and am so grateful for teamers who have been kind enough to point out what they see as contributing to the struggle, and/or humble enough to empathise.

So next time you realise that you are beating yourself up because of ‘average voicing’, give yourself a break. It happens to the best of us! (ha ha). I hope you are all had an enjoyable Summer, got something of a break and wish all my colleagues a safe and productive 2015.

International:



ASLIA National Conference (ANC), Perth

Kelly Hodgins

Last year I was fortunate enough to represent SLIANZ at ASLIA National Conference (ANC), in Perth 29-31 August. I think every interpreter should take the opportunity to attend an ANC at least once in their career. I gained an enormous amount, met amazing colleagues, came away with a fresh perspective on my interpreting practice and had a fabulous time overall. There's too much to tell so I'll share a few points that really resonated with me.

Conference commenced on Friday night with the J.W. Flynn Orator - the well deserving Chevoy Sweeny who told a witty narrative of her journey as an interpreter. She shared that we need to be constantly reminded of the fact that we are meeting Deaf people in some of their most vulnerable moments in life. We have a responsibility to keep ourselves in check if we feel we are slipping into complacency during our interpreting practice. What we may consider as trivial could be very significant for the person we are working with.

Chevoy ended her oration with this thought and analogy – 'Interpreting is not a race, there are no winners – it's a journey'. Say you go out jogging one day and see another jogger heading in the wrong direction, you have two choices when they come near you could either stick your foot out and make them stumble then explain 'You're going in the wrong direction'. Or you could start running alongside them and then once the relationship has been built you could start to turn a different way and chances are they will follow

but query as to why you are heading in that direction and then you have the opportunity to be able to say 'Because this is a better way for us to go.' Wouldn't it be great if we here in NZ adopted that philosophy when team interpreting?

During ANC one common theme raised was regarding empowerment. We need to remember that when we do our job well, as interpreters, we empower Deaf people.

Karen Bontempo presented research findings from interviewing a number of international Deaf professionals/leaders on interpreters. The participants of the study indicated the following criteria they use when selecting interpreters:

Attitude

Trust

Knowledge of the setting

Familiarity with terminology

Good signed to spoken language interpreting skills (the most common response)

Participant feedback included comments such as *'their voicing is more important to me than their signing skills'*, *'I only book the good interpreters'* and *'I reschedule or not go if good interpreters are not available'*. The evidence stated that Deaf leaders/professionals invest enormous amounts in interpreters and are constantly bridging the gap. Instead of being able to just convey their message, Deaf professionals have to re-shuffle what they are trying to say. They have to adapt their signing to fit the interpreter's skill level by ensuring their signs are clearly articulated and their pace is at a much slower rate so they will be understood by the interpreter. Participants mentioned needing to figure out how to work with interpreters and acquaint themselves with the interpreter's delivery style. As a result Deaf consumers have to do the work of interpreters.

It can be assumed then that, if international research has shown this occurs it also takes place in here in New Zealand. Which begs the question - Are we, interpreters, not the ones being paid to facilitate communication? It is our responsibility to make certain we have the appropriate level of competency for the job. As a profession I believe we can remedy this issue by ensuring we take ownership of our interpretations. When I hear remarks like the ones above from prominent consumers I am reminded of the foundation on which we should stand, before embarking on and during an assignment - our Code of Ethics. Once we have graduated do we still years later hold on to those five important principles?

I will finish by posing a few questions for you to contemplate when you are next on an interpreting assignment. If Deaf professionals/leaders, who represent a small percentage of the (wider) Deaf community, are facing such dilemmas what then can be said of the interactions 'grass-roots' Deaf community members have with interpreters?

Are prosodic, lexical and pragmatic choices you make impacting negatively on how the (competence and professionalism) Deaf person is perceived?

Do you improve your skills at the expense of Deaf people, especially with those who do not yet have a voice to be able to speak up and request another more appropriate interpreter?

Do you have a sense of severity in what you are undertaking and who is doing the work, you as the interpreter, or the Deaf consumer?

SLIANZ Conference Updates :



Interpreters
in an **Evolving**
WORLD



2015 SLIANZ
Conference info coming
to a inbox near you!



Start thinking what skills you have!

Registration & info on its way



Ever wanted to feature in your own film?

Ever dreamed of seeing yourself on the big screen?

Your name up in lights? Well now is your chance!

Interpreters in an Evolving WORLD

Interpreters Film Festival

Friday night conference entertainment
3rd July 2015

Deaf Society of Canterbury
80 Fitzgerald Ave (corner of Tuam St) Christchurch

Film to be no longer than 5 minutes
Submitted on USB/DVD



Connect Spring Workshop 2014: Medical, Mental Health and Deaf Interpreting

By Lynx



Facilitator and Presenter: Nicholas Padden-Duncan (Interpreter, Company Director, Presenter; UK)

We would like to thank the Deaf Development Trust and SLIANZ for their generous support for the 2014 Connect Spring Workshop. As well as supporting a number of Deaf people to attend, these funds also helped to provide catering throughout the three days. The first day of the three day workshop was a Deaf-only day. Twenty-one Deaf participants from Christchurch, Wellington, Hawkes Bay, Hamilton and Auckland

engaged in lively discussions and activities, with Nicholas defining and clarifying the concept of Deaf interpreting. The presentation included a brief history of the Deaf Interpreting profession, as well as an exploration of diversity in the Deaf community and what that might mean for Deaf interpreting. One activity involved a debate, with one team arguing in support of Deaf Interpreters, and the other team arguing against. Nicholas posed some challenging questions regarding ethics and boundaries, and linked these discussions to interpreting theory and practice. This involved some activities and discussions around cultural mediation and awareness. There were some fun and interesting role plays, involving Deaf people working together from some video clips of British Sign Language (BSL) and which offered a taste of how Deaf interpreters might work in teams.

While the day covered a wide range of topics and activities, Nicholas was at pains to point out that this workshop was only a tiny fraction of the learning that would be necessary to become qualified as a Deaf Interpreter. The last part of the day was a discussion about the next steps involved in the possibility of a qualification for NZ Deaf Interpreters. George Major, the Programme Leader of NZSL-English Interpreting and Deaf Studies at AUT, kindly attended the workshop in the afternoon to listen to the discussion and to try and answer any questions. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for a working group of Deaf people to pursue this goal. Connect is happy to support this group and will continue communication with those who indicated they would be willing to be involved.

The next two days were equally stimulating and thought-provoking. The Deaf participants were joined by 18 hearing interpreters for the rest of the weekend. Saturday morning began with a review of the previous day, followed by almost two hours of discussions and practical exercises with an emphasis on mental health. Participants considered the qualities needed by interpreters in this field, and brainstormed some definitions and translation of terminology. Later there were more role plays, this time involving a team of Deaf and hearing interpreters working together. The afternoon finished with exercises, using BSL videos as a resource for interpreting practice in mental health settings.

Sunday focused on interpreting in medical settings, starting with a broader discussion of healthy communities, and what factors influence this. Participants explored a comparison between English and NZSL in the context of conveying emotional intent, with Nicholas emphasising the need for interpreters to adapt to a Deaf person's idiosyncratic and heterogenous language and educational background. A fun session on interpreting some English idioms kept everyone alert. The last session involved participants signing different body parts, and discussing the merits of using classifiers and space to convey the meaning of various afflictions. These activities were via small group work as well as demonstrations to the wider audience. A final practice of Deaf and hearing team interpreting showed an improvement in cohesion and clarity compared to an earlier role play.

As with all workshops, some people were challenged by certain aspects while others found these aspects familiar, and vice versa. Almost everyone mentioned that having equal numbers of Deaf and hearing participants in a collaborative environment was a very positive development, and there was much enthusiasm for more workshops along these lines.

Several people talked about the benefit of a three day intensive programme, which complements the SLIANZ annual conference.

Various people said that the workshop had been a lot of fun and that they had appreciated the opportunity to learn and laugh at the same time.

SLIANZ UPDATES:

SLIANZ new website update!

The new website will no longer have a members-only section, however, our ordinary members (qualified interpreters) will still need a password in order to submit forms and update the directory.

That's the next piece of good news, *memberships and forms* will now be processed via the website! Payments will need to be made into our bank account via online banking (or whichever method you prefer), but your membership 'form' will be submitted via the website.

If you are joining Slianz for the first time, or are a student upgrading to an ordinary membership we will require a copy of your qualification, which can be scanned and attached to your application.

PD forms will also be submitted online and we would encourage you to submit these throughout the year as you attend events. Each event will require a separate form, so these can be submitted at any time! Any proofs needing to be provided can be scanned into your computer and attached to your form.

Registration for events will also be made via the website (again with payments made separately into the SLIANZ bank account).

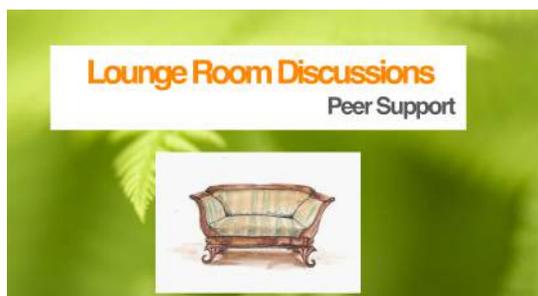
Interpreters, keep an eye on your inbox for an email from your committee advising you of the process for updating your details to the new website. We will email an interim password in order for you to enter your details. This will be conducted over the next few weeks.

The newsletter send out was your the last newsletter in our traditional SLIANZ format. Future newsletters will also be managed through our amazing new website. You will still receive them in your inbox, however the format will be a little different.

The newsletter will contain an introduction to each article with links to the full articles, available on the website. This should also save space in your email accounts.

Feedback on this and our other new features is welcome!

Enjoy Thanks, Fleur Daniel (Website)



iSign Lounge Room Discussion - Wellington

By Alisha

Interpreting at the United Nations in Geneva

"Graham Norton may have been absent...but who needs him when you've got James Bichan facilitating and Rosie Henley and Victoria Manning in the 'Red Chair'.

The first Lounge Room Discussions in Wellington kicked off to a great start, with a great turn out from our lovely Wellington sisterhood all keen to hear about Rosie and Victoria sharing their experience working together at the United Nations in Geneva.

An incredible topic to start the first of many Lounge Room Discussions. Some interpreters may dream to interpret at the UN, for us, some of our colleagues here in NZ were lucky to have this opportunity... which doesn't come around often.

Their presentation was exceptional and no they weren't thrown off the Red Chair in Graham Norton style.

It was a very interesting presentation, particularly talking about the benefits of Deaf and interpreters working together. Although there were many challenges, they had achieved what they went there to achieve as a 'team'. Presenting also allowed Rosie to reflect on her experience at the UN and being able to share that experience with an amazing person like Victoria.

It's important to remember that team work between interpreters and clients is incredibly important. Their UN assignment was high level and high register. There was endless amounts of prep and hard work put into this assignment! Long hours and late nights for both interpreters and Deaf to prep allowed the Deaf client to be at ease. Victoria could focus on her job with full confidence and did not have to monitor the interpreter output to ensure her message got across to the United Nations committee.

For those who missed out on this opportunity, come join us at our next LRD. We welcome presenters to take on the 'Red Chair' with a topic for discussion. Get in touch with Alisha, interpreterwlg@isign.co.nz “

General Matters:



iSign Interpreter Grants, by James Bichan

As you know, late last year iSign announced the launch of our first ever iSign Interpreter Grant. We wanted to establish a sustainable grant with an aim to encouraging the ongoing development of interpreters across the country. We also wanted to provide interpreters with the financial flexibility to attend or create educational experiences of their own. So, twice a year, iSign is making \$4,000 available to interpreters interested in furthering their knowledge and skills as well as sharing this with their peers.

Earlier in February the iSign Board met to decide the distribution of the first of these grants. It's with great pride we congratulate the recipients of our inaugural iSign Interpreter Grant. The letters have been sent so please keep an eye out! Those who receive a grant were able to communicate, not only the personal gain they hope to achieve, but also the benefit they hope to bring to their colleagues as a result of their proposals. Congratulations and all the best for your individual pursuits. We're already looking forward to seeing your progress!



A big thanks also to everyone who applied! It's clear to us there are a lot of great ideas out there and we're pleased to give our backing to help get some of them off the ground! In a few months there will be another call for our August/September applications so get your thinking caps on! Until then, an extra thanks to all interpreters for all your hard work!

President	Rebecca Curtis	president@sliaz.org.nz
Secretary	Kelly Hodgins	secretary@sliaz.org.nz
Treasurer	Alisha Davidson	treasurer@sliaz.org.nz
Newsletter	Sarah Blundell	sliaznewsletter@gmail.com



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